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Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Letter dated 21 December 2017 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you the present urgent letter to inform you of recent unjustified travel and movement restrictions imposed by the United States Administration on the members of the Syrian Permanent Mission and the Syrian government officials travelling to the United States to represent Syria at designated international organizations, including officials travelling to New York to conduct business at the United Nations, and the members of their household.

I attach herewith a copy of the communication from the United States Mission to the United Nations, dated 5 December 2017, to the Syrian Permanent Mission in this regard (annex I).

I would also like to inform you that I have sent a response to the United States Mission, clarifying the position of the Syrian Government towards these unjustified measures. I enclose herewith a copy of that communication, which contains a legal defiance of these politicized measures that violate the General Convention and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (annex II). In this context, I call upon you to use your mandates as Chair of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country to communicate with the other members thereof and with the US Mission to the United Nations, in order to take all necessary action in line with what was agreed upon in the framework of the Committee, with its latest report (A/72/26), and with the recently adopted (by consensus) General Assembly resolution 72/124, in which the Assembly endorsed the above-mentioned Committee report and all of its recommendations and conclusions without any reservations. It is time to put an end to the violations of the General Convention and to all punitive measures imposed by the United States Administration on certain permanent missions to the United Nations.

It would be highly appreciated if the present letter and its annexes could be circulated to the distinguished members of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex I

Note verbale dated 5 December 2017 from the United States Mission to the United Nations addressed to the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations

The United States Mission to the United Nations wishes to inform the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations of the establishment of new domestic travel restrictions for members of the Permanent Mission and Syrian government officials travelling to the United States to represent Syria at designated international organizations, including officials travelling to New York to conduct business at the United Nations. These restrictions also apply to members of household of such officials.

Unless a waiver is requested and obtained from the Department's Office of Foreign Missions, pursuant to the Foreign Missions Act Determination, No. 2017-10, dated 21 November 2017, in order to reasonably achieve one or more of the purposes set forth in section 204 (b) of the Foreign Missions Act (22 U.S.C. § 4304 (b)), Syrian government officials representing Syria at designated international organizations, including members of household accompanying such officials, will be restricted to a 25-mile radius from Columbus Circle, New York City.

The Permanent Mission may request a waiver by submitting a request with appropriate justification to OFMTravelServices@state.gov.

The United States Mission will provide the Permanent Mission with a letter authorizing travel outside of the 25-mile radius in the event such requests are granted.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations may direct any questions regarding this matter to the Department's Office of Foreign Missions Services and Special Projects Unit at 202 647 3417 or OFMTravelServices@state.gov.

Annex II

Note verbale dated 21 December 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the United States Mission to the United Nations

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United States Mission to the United Nations, and, with reference to the note verbale dated 5 December 2017 regarding the US decision to impose new domestic travel restrictions on the members of the Syrian Permanent Mission and the Syrian government officials travelling to the United States to represent Syria at designated international organizations, including officials travelling to New York to conduct business at the United Nations, and the members of their household, the Syrian Permanent Mission wishes to clarify its position as follows:

1. First, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic expresses its deep concern at the imposition of this unjustified punitive measure against the Mission's personnel, Syrian officials and members of their household, taking into consideration that these personnel and the Syrian government officials travelling to the United States, and the members of their household, have respected and committed to all US laws and regulations, whether in conducting their duties within the framework of the United Nations, or in practising their normal daily life with their kids and families.

2. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic was abrupt by the timing of this decision, which was taken at a time when there is no exchange of embassies between the two countries, to invoke that such punitive action is based on the principle of reciprocity, especially that it targets the Syrian representatives and officials within the framework of the United Nations, while the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (General Convention) must govern any procedure towards them.

3. The imposition of this punitive measure by the US Administration constitutes a direct violation of its obligations as the host country of United Nations Headquarters, and comes in violation of the spirit and purposes of both the General Convention and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which, although they did not directly address the issue of establishing restrictions on travel and movement, were both based mainly on the good intentions and mutual respect among States in their bilateral relations and on principles of equality and justice, as well as the avoidance of negative effects of bilateral relations on the duties of the host State.

4. The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic would like to remind the Permanent Mission of the United States of the latest report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country (A/72/26), and of the recently adopted (by consensus) General Assembly resolution 72/124, in which the Assembly endorsed the above-mentioned Committee report and all of its recommendations and conclusions without any reservation, in particular the one included in paragraph 89 (c), which clearly stated: "The Committee notes that the observance of privileges and immunities is an issue of great importance. The Committee underlines in this regard that, in the context of the functioning of delegations and missions to the United Nations, the implementation of the instruments listed in paragraph 89 (a) cannot be subject to any restrictions arising from the bilateral relations of the host country."

5. In this context, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic would also like to remind the United States Mission to the United Nations of the statements and interventions made by its own representatives during the work of the Sixth Committee at the seventy-second session, which are available in the official records, in which

they affirmed the Unites States' full respect and commitment to the General Convention, and pledged to work towards resolving all obstacles objected to by representatives of permanent missions without discrimination or politicization. They also did not express reservations on the report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country, concerning the call to the host country to lift restrictions on any permanent delegations and any United Nations staff members who hold the nationality of certain States.

6. The Syrian Permanent Mission deeply believes that when our ancestors had founded the United Nations and established its Charter with all its purposes and principles, and then signed the General Convention with the United States Government, they never expected or even thought that the day would come when the host country would abandon its duties and obligations of hospitality, and impose punitive measures on any of those working within the framework of the United Nations, especially when such measures come as a consequence of political considerations, which now come before commitments made by the host country on the day it sought to host the United Nations Headquarters and promised to open its doors without restriction or exception to the representatives of all States and peoples of the world.

Based on the above, the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic calls upon the United States Administration, through its Mission to the United Nations, to reconsider these newly imposed unjustified punitive measures, as well as the restriction measures imposed on the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2014.